

103

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HELSINKI ACCORDS

Y 4. SE 2: 103-1-2

Implementation of the Helsinki Acco...

HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

ONE HUNDRED THIRD CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

CRISIS IN BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

FEBRUARY 4, 1993

Printed for the use of the
Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe

[CSCE 103-1-2]



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CRISIS IN BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 1993

COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

Washington, DC.

The hearing was held in room SD-628 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, DC, at 2 p.m., Senator Dennis DeConcini, Chairman, presiding.

Present: Senator Dennis DeConcini, Chairman, Steny H. Hoyer, Co-Chairman, Commissioners Alfonse D'Amato, Barbara Mikulski, Bob Graham, and Christopher Smith

Also present: Senator Larry Pressler, Representatives John Olver, Frank McCloskey, Ben Cardin, and Helen Bentley.

Staff present: Sam Wise, Staff Director; Jane Fisher, Deputy Staff Director; Mary Sue Hafner, Deputy Staff Director and General Counsel; and David Evans, Senior Advisor.

Co-Chairman HOYER. The Commission will come to order.

Senator DeConcini, our Chairman, will be here shortly.

We have a friend back who has been with us before. But before I get into my statement, let me say how pleased I am to have Senator Mikulski who has just been added as the newest member of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe. We welcome her. She is a significant advocate on the behalf of the interests of human rights both in this country and throughout the world and has been someone, who although not a member, has been in very close contact with and worked with this Commission over the last decade. And so we're very, very appreciative of the fact that she has been added to our ranks.

I'd also like to welcome Mr. McCloskey and Mr. Cardin who, although not members of the Commission, have been very much involved.

Mr. Olver from Massachusetts is also with us. Again, not a member of the Commission, but somebody who has talked to me about his concerns regarding Yugoslavia and Eastern Europe in general. And we're appreciative of the fact that he is here.

Mr. Minister, the Commission is grateful that you are joining us again today to discuss the current status of negotiations on the future of Bosnia-Herzegovina. I would have hoped that we might have met again to discuss the post-war situation in your country. However, as all of us gathered here today realize, the horrors of war continue to ravage your country. We have just learned, for example, that within the past week more than 3,000 Moslems have been forced from their homes in the Bosnian village of Trebinje and have joined the ranks of the thousands of other refugees left in

limbo by the war. Tragically, as we sit here today, the situation continues to deteriorate and the fighting escalates.

This is, of course, no surprise to you. During your testimony before the Commission in May of last year you stated, and I am quoting from your statement, "if urgent measures are not taken to enforce peace in Bosnia-Herzegovina, I'm afraid to say that the loss of human life and suffering that have already reached an unprecedented scale in post-World War II Europe, will increase further." You predicted the deaths of tens of thousands of people either by starvation or disease or mass executions and killings.

Regrettably, the West has failed to act decisively to stop the slaughter and every day the costs of whatever course of action we ultimately take are increasing. There is, of course, plenty of blame to go around for this failed international response: blame for the United States, the United Nations, the European Community, and for individual actors. But throughout this shell game of negotiations, moved from London to Geneva and now from Geneva to New York, the war crimes mount.

In view of the current status of the UN-EC talks, and particularly the question of whether the United States should support the Vance-Owen plan, I and I know my colleagues are interested in your thoughts as to what the international community can and should do now. As you may know, Senator DeConcini and I, along with several members of the Helsinki Commission and the Congress, have introduced legislation, a congressional call to action, if you will, regarding our options for the former Yugoslavia.

This resolution, as perhaps you know, calls for the following:

Enforcement of the existing U.N. "no-fly" zone over Bosnia; lifting of the international arms embargo as it applies to Bosnia-Herzegovina; providing for the immediate, effective, and unimpeded delivery of humanitarian aid to all civilian populations; and gaining unimpeded access to all camps, prisons and detention centers in Bosnia.

Before recognizing you, Mr. Minister, and you're the one we, of course, want to talk to, I would like to now turn to Senator Mikulski for any opening statement that she might want to make.

Senator MIKULSKI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have no opening statement. I think all of us are looking forward to hearing the Minister's report to us and then engaging in a dialogue about what would be the best way to proceed on this very gripping situation.

Co-Chairman HOYER. Thank you, Senator.

Mr. McCloskey?

Mr. MCCLOSKEY. Thank you, Congressman Hoyer. I do have a brief statement and I appreciate your generosity in inviting me here and allowing me here to give it. I also appreciate all the help and leadership we've all had on this issue from Senator DeConcini.

I want to pay homage to all those people of Bosnia—Moslems, Serbs, and Croats—who did not want this war. I want to pay homage to their ongoing resistance to genocidal aggression and to the politics of national hatred and intolerance preached by the perpetrators of that genocide.

I welcome Mr. Silajdzic as a representative of all these Bosnians and of their heroic resistance.

In 1961, 13 years after the Berlin airlift decisively drew the line against Soviet expansion in Europe, President Kennedy stood in Berlin and proclaimed the proudest boast of the post-war world, "I am a Berliner." Today the proudest boast in the post-cold war world may be, "I am a Sarajevian." Yet no western diplomat stands in Sarajevo to make this statement. Thus far, no western action, and I mean no western action, earns the respect of the embattled Bosnian people. Instead of acting in solidarity with the Bosnian resistance, the West has only wrung its hands and now apparently to put an end to its own embarrassment, the West stands on the brink of imposing surrender on Bosnia.

I continue to hope that this will change, not only for the sake of the Bosnian people, but also for the sake of the credibility of our own values and principles, the stability of Europe and the long term national security interests of the United States.

I want to commend the Clinton Administration for so far declining to endorse the Vance-Owen settlement plan. This decision is a defining moment not just for Bosnia and its suffering people, but also for the post-cold war world. To endorse the Vance-Owen plan would be to ratify genocidal aggression. I cannot imagine a more effective way to invite further genocidal Serb aggression in Macedonia and Kosovo and trigger a wider Balkan war. I can't imagine a more dangerous precedent to set for the so-called "new world order" in Europe. I find it amazing that this plan is getting serious consideration. It reminds me of the fable about the "Emperor's New Clothes": the Vance-Owen plan is about as devoid of merit as the emperor was of body cover.

To endorse the Vance-Owen plan would also to be commit a monumental blunder; it would put U.S. taxpayer funds and ground troops behind a plan which is not only immoral but also unworkable. The Vance-Owen plan would call for tens of thousands of additional peacekeeping troops in Bosnia but still rely on the voluntary good faith cooperation of Serb forces.

This kind of peacekeeping has a track record—the Vance plan in Croatia—and we see the recent results in ongoing strife there. That plan has been utter failure. Serb forces have defied every one of its provisions that was inconvenient to their land grab and ethnic cleansing strategy.

The UN peacekeepers in Croatia have, in effect, become hostages to the Serb forces there. Not one displaced Croat has been able to return home and Croatia remains effectively partitioned. Vance and Owen may claim the Vance plan achieved a 10-month peace, but the reality is that the plan there allowed Serb forces to finish up their ethnic cleansing. The only way peace can endure under the Vance plan is if Croatia accepts the permanent loss of one-third of its territory.

I also want to underline the degree to which the Vance-Owen plan represents a retreat from UN Security Council demands. I urge the Clinton Administration to focus on this issue and to insist as a first order of business that Vance and Owen explain why they want to impose their settlement in the absence of any degree of compliance by Serb forces, and incomplete compliance by Croat forces, with Security Council demands.

Citing just a few examples, the Security Council has demanded since May 1992, and I quote from Resolution 752, "that those units of the Yugoslav Peoples Army and elements of the Croatian army now in Bosnia-Herzegovina must either be withdrawn or be subject to the authority of the government of Bosnia-Herzegovina or be disbanded and disarmed with their weapons placed under effective international monitoring."

The Security Council has demanded since June 1992, and I quote from Resolution 761, "that all parties and others concern cooperate fully with UNPROFOR and the international relief agencies and organizations and take all necessary steps to ensure the safety of the personnel."

The Security Council has demanded since August 1992, and I quote from Resolution 770 and I believe the Minister will refer to this shortly and very importantly and very tragically, "that unimpeded and continued access to all camps, prisons and detention centers be granted to the International Committee of the Red Cross and other relevant humanitarian organizations and all detainees therein receive humane treatment, including adequate food, shelter and medical care."

The Security Council has also demanded since August 1992, I'm quoting Resolution 771, "that all parties and others concerned in the former Yugoslav and all military forces in Bosnia-Herzegovina immediately cease and desist from all breaches of international humanitarian law including actions such as ethnic cleansing."

The Security Council has reaffirmed in November 1992, and I quote from Resolution 787, "that any taking," and I think this is most important—"that any taking of territory taken by force or any practice of ethnic cleansing is unlawful and unacceptable and will not be permitted to affect the outcome of negotiations and constitutional arrangements for the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina."

This is what the U.N. Security Council has demanded. These demands reflect the will and conscience of the international community. Serb forces remain in total defiance of these demands. The Vance-Owen plan appeases those Serb forces by throwing everyone of these Security Council demands overboard. I say it is the Vance-Owen plan that should be thrown overboard.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Co-Chairman HOYER. Thank you, Mr. McCloskey.

Mr. Cardin?

Mr. CARDIN. No opening statement.

Co-Chairman HOYER. Mr. Olver?

It gives me a great deal of pleasure again to welcome the Foreign Minister of Bosnia-Herzegovina who has testified before the Commission previously, Dr. Haris Silajdzic. Doctor, we're pleased to have you here and look forward to hearing from you.

TESTIMONY OF THE HONORABLE HARIS SILAJDZIC, FOREIGN MINISTER OF BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

Foreign Minister SILAJDZIC. Mr. Chairman, members of the Commission, ladies and gentlemen, I thank you for the opportunity to testify before the Commission.

I have just returned from Geneva where the Conference on the former Yugoslavia was suspended by the Co-Chairmen Cyrus Vance and David Owen.

The Geneva Conference began against the backdrop of the shelling of Bosnia-Herzegovina and 5 months later it has concluding and the shelling continues and indeed has intensified. Negotiations in the name of peace have facilitated the intensification of war.

The reason for this is very simple. Instead of responding to naked aggression, the United Nations sponsored peace process has increasingly delivered a series of concessions and rewards to the aggressor. The hope behind the process would seem to have been that if enough concessions were given, the aggressor would be satisfied and cease his aggression. During months and months of ineffective negotiations, broken agreements and violated cease-fires the aggressor has grown more wanton and bold.

Mr. Chairman, as should be apparent for after these long months of failures, the negotiation process and the formula it has produced are fundamentally flawed. And, as I hope to explain to you today, not only does the Vance-Owen plan hold no real promise of peace, it holds the seeds of renewed violence and terror.

First, I would like to address the negotiating process. As you know, the Geneva talks were to begin as the other key provisions of the London Conference were to be implemented. Foremost among these provisions to be implemented were: air-exclusion zone or no-fly zone; placing heavy weapons under the international control; securing convoys carrying humanitarian aid; putting an end to the ethnic cleansing which is a euphemism for genocide, as you know; opening of another airport that is Tuzla airport.

Co-Chairman HOYER. Mr. Minister, we're going to have to leave in 5 minutes for a vote, but you will have completed your statement at that time and then we'll turn it over to the Chairman who has come. Then we'll get right back.

Foreign Minister SILAJDZIC. OK.

Co-Chairman HOYER. Mr. Minister, proceed.

Foreign Minister SILAJDZIC. The government of Bosnia-Herzegovina unconditionally agreed to the talks in Geneva because of the firm assurances of the Chair that the international community was serious about the implementation of these provisions; provisions that mean life or death to our people.

What has occurred, and this is very important, ladies and gentlemen, is quite the opposite of what we were assured and what we had hoped: the talks in Geneva went on without the implementation of any of the London Agreement provisions. Thus, the talks proceeded side-by-side with the continued genocide of the people of Bosnia-Herzegovina. And this placed our delegation at an absolute disadvantage. So we still have the insurgents of tanks, armor, infantry and artillery from Serbia. We still have the air raids. We still have the ethnic cleansing. We still have the concentration camps. The developments at the talks reflect the advantage of the aggressor plainly.

In essence, the Geneva process has treated the victim and the aggressor equally and adopted the ethnic approach of the aggressor. Although my government is a multi-party government and democratically elected, it was relegated to the role of representing one

ethnic group. Furthermore, the talks legitimized the representatives of the aggressor party on the basis of its superior military strength. We have been forced to negotiate with war criminals—the same people who refused to implement the London Conference agreement. Therefore, the Geneva talks have given the aggressor time to try to complete its war plan.

However, there are two objectives that the Serbian ultra-nationalists, also a euphemism for fascist, have been unable to achieve: the overthrow of the government of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the ethnic partition of our country. Tragically, this will occur if my government agrees to the Vance-Owen plan and if this plan is supported by the United States Government.

We are aware of the criticism in some diplomatic circles of our government's refusal to agree to the Vance-Owen plan. We have agreed to the constitutional principles put forward by Mr. Vance and Lord Owen and the agreements for yet another cease-fire. What we cannot accept is the ethnic partition of our country and the abolishing of our government because, ladies and gentlemen, this plan would encourage the national fascist forces, would discourage democratic forces in our region. Please understand that the virus of fascism is out. We must read these early symptoms, this is 1938 again. If we do not deal with it now, we must deal with it later. Better now than later.

If we accept the ethnic partition of our country, as put forward by the Vance plan, we will be acquiescing to the policy that drives ethnic cleansing, a policy which is based on a fascist and utterly undemocratic rationale, and a policy that has been advanced by the most wanton crimes against humanity. Far from punishing these crimes, it will be rewarding them.

For centuries we have taken great pride in our society's ethnic and religious tolerance. This tradition of tolerance was further reflected in the free and fair elections that were held and the multi-party government that was formed as a result. When our government was first elected and constituted, human rights groups, the European Community and other observers, universally acknowledged the soundness of our democratic processes and human rights practices at a time when many raised doubts about the democratic processes and human rights practices of other former Yugoslav republics. Bosnia was held up as a model of democracy. It was this new democracy that was attacked and it is this new democracy for which our people have struggled and endured for ten months now.

Under the proposed Interim Arrangements from the Vance-Owen plan for Bosnia-Herzegovina all of this will be lost: the state will be abolished and a nine member Interim Council appointed by the three so-called "parties" will rule. If we agree to the proposed Interim Arrangements for Bosnia, we will be ignoring the free will of our people. We will be forced to suspend the legal constitution of our country, abolish the democratically-elected government and leave war criminals to decide the future of our citizens.

What we ask of the United States is to support democracy and the legal authorities of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Furthermore, we ask for support of our rights as a sovereign state under international law and under the U.N. Charter.

Specifically, what we seek from the United States, the international community and from a peace plan is the following:

The territorial gains by force will not be recognized; that the return of refugees will be guaranteed and conditions for their return secured; that territories subjected to ethnic cleansing will not be left even temporarily under the control of forces that executed mass killings, mass expulsions and mass rape; to secure the continuity of the legal authorities of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the cessation of activities by para-military organizations; to help form the basis of a new Bosnian constitution which will guarantee the cohesion of our country as we begin reconstruction; to establish a war crimes tribunal which will investigate and prosecute war crimes committed in Bosnia-Herzegovina, including rape; to implement all relevant UN Security Council resolutions, including the enforcement of the no-fly zone, delivery of humanitarian aid, placement of heavy weapons under international control; lift the arms embargo against the government of Bosnia-Herzegovina so that it can defend itself as its right under UN Charter, Article 51; lift the siege of Sarajevo without delay. If you don't lift the siege of Sarajevo, we must soon expect not tens of thousands of dead, but hundreds of thousands.

I wish I were not right when I told, as you said, Mr. Hoyer, about tens of thousands. Now I'm right, unfortunately. Now we are talking about hundreds of thousands. If this civilization can take it, then it can afford to do nothing.

Mr. Chairman, it would be a tragedy—a real crime—if after all this negotiation and after all the involvement of the United Nations, the end result was simply to put a stamp of legitimacy on the rewards of aggression. There are practical issues here, namely that the Vance plan will not bring an end to conflict, rather will create more polarization. But more fundamentally, there are critical issues of principle: democracy, human rights and sovereignty—as well as crimes against humanity, to which your great country, the United States, cannot afford to turn a blind eye.

Mr. McCloskey, you mentioned and you paid homage to those who did want not war in Bosnia-Herzegovina. I assure, that is a great majority.

Let us not listen only to those who hold weapons, that is unfortunately what the Vance-Owen plan envisioned, let us not let the might be the only right.

Thank you very much.

Co-Chairman HOYER. Mr. Minister, thank you for a very compelling, moving and important statement. As I said, the bells you heard were calling the House Members to a vote. Senator DeConcini, our Chairman, will take over and we will return.

Mr. Chairman?

Chairman DECONCINI. Chairman Hoyer, thank you very much for conducting and beginning these meetings. I was conducting the Senate Intelligence Committee hearing, Mr. Minister, which is the reason I couldn't be here.

It's an honor to welcome you here and I was here for most of your testimony. Rarely in my lifetime have I met anyone with greater courage and dignity that you have put forth in the face of an overwhelming tragedy. It's the latter of which has become for

me a piercing mark of shame. I am ashamed because my own government has at least until now, been a partner in Europe's refusal to take definitive action to stop the violent aggression by one country on the sovereign territory of another including the genocide that is occurring even to this very moment. If this aggression is allowed to stand, we might as well forget our dream of a peaceful new world order. Tyrants such as Milosevic will attempt similar land grabs and ethnic cleansing throughout the newly democratic nations of Europe and the former Soviet Union.

I will not go into the litany of horrors which I have personally had witnesses tell me who have come from the concentration camps inside Bosnia-Herzegovina, which are operated by the ethnic Serbs. I have written those down and we have talked about those before and none of us can claim ignorance of what is going on today.

I will, instead, focus on the so-called Vance-Owen peace plan for just a moment, a plan which if endorsed, will be a green light to all those in the CIS Republics and elsewhere who seek to achieve border changes by force. In effect, we will be promoting the principle of might makes right.

Lord Owen pompously blames America for failing to encourage the Bosnian government to accept the plan. Putting aside, for a moment, the incredible arrogance in the implication that the Bosnian government should bow to the pressures from us or anyone regarding the future of their country, let us consider just two of the many flaws in the Vance-Owen plan.

First of all, two of the three parties to these negotiations have rejected the proposal. So from the outset, the will necessary to implement the plan doesn't exist.

The view is reinforced by the recent breakdown of the peace settlement achieved in Croatia. There, the UN inability to fully implement the agreement has led frustrated Croat forces to take matters into their own hands.

The UN presence in Croatia may have postponed an escalation of fighting between Serbs and Croats, but it has solved nothing except to give the Croats time to regroup and strengthen their resolve.

Is it realistic to expect anything more promising from the proposed plan for Bosnia-Herzegovina?

Once again, as has been done with such dismal failure in other regions of the world in this century, the Western diplomats have developed a plan which rewards aggression and chastises the victims who dare to protest. Just this morning Serbian forces bombarded Sarajevo again with another vicious round of shellings. Should we reward them with even more territory?

Second, Vance and Owen seem to believe that the plan is viable if endorsed by the Security Council and supported by UN peacekeepers, including the United States forces. But those troops would run the risk of being held hostage to the crisis in the same way the British, French and Russians, and other UN forces are held today: they can be shot at, but can't shoot back.

I am prepared to endorse, and advocate, the use of multilateral force to implement UN resolutions regarding this crisis. But I'm not prepared to send American soldiers into harm's way without

the clear authority to defend themselves and to carry out their mission.

Let's not kid ourselves: because of the Western appeasement, this crisis has already been permitted to escalate to such proportions that any option which still remains for the United States has significant costs of one kind or another.

The diplomats tell us this plan is our only option. I guess it is our only option if our goal is to make sure the new Europe will be the pawn of war criminals whose word can never be trusted.

Many military experts tell us any type of military action would lead to a Vietnam-type quagmire. They also said this before the Gulf War. But President Bush exercised leadership during that crisis and built a consensus among the American people and the world community at large for his policy.

President Clinton can do the same in this crisis. I have no doubt that our military experts can find a workable plan that would both enforce current UN Resolutions and bring relief to the victims of aggression in Bosnia. We're not talking about occupying the former Yugoslavia with American troops.

Mr. Minister, once again, I thank you for being here. It's a privilege to have you once again before this Committee.

I will now yield for any statement the Senator from Florida cares to make. He was not here for the opening statements I note and I yield to you for questions.

Senator GRAHAM. I have no statement, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman DECONCINI. I yield to the Senator from Maryland for any questions she may have.

Senator MIKULSKI. Mr. Minister, we thank you for that eloquent statement.

One of my questions would be how would you recommend the United States take action for the Serbians to enter into negotiation? Another lady by the name of Margaret Thatcher advocated that Serbia would not enter into serious negotiation unless it, too, felt the sting of military action in a targeted way against infrastructure; that the people of Belgrade knew how serious the world was about this matter and that essentially the kinds of so-called negotiations that have been going on has been the acquiescence to the aggressor. What do you think could be done to really force an authentic negotiation process?

Foreign Minister SILAJDZIC. In my opinion it is to start implementing the UN Resolutions and enforcing them, meaning—

Senator MIKULSKI. The UN Resolutions.

Foreign Minister SILAJDZIC. Yes. Mr. Hoyer was talking about Resolution 752 which calls for the withdrawal, dismantling or placing all forces under the Bosnian government. Now, Milosevic's regime is built up on the military strength. He projected this policy into Bosnia through the weapons. That is why we say that all heavy weaponry must be placed under strict physical international control, meaning that the current Serbs in Bosnia will not remain in physical possession of these arms.

The government of Bosnia-Herzegovina is making a compromise here and we say we are ready to place also our heavy weaponry under the international control immediately. And in our mind there should be a deadline set for that, actually that should be

done immediately. We have to stop the suffering of the civilian population. The only way is to place all heavy weapons under the international control but not supervising and not monitoring. We had it in the London Conference. But strict physical control, sequestering the weapons. This is the only way to have the meaningful talks.

And I also think that it's time to say that the siege of Sarajevo must be lifted. We cannot accept such a political, brutal blackmail at the end of the 20th century. They will not lift the siege of Sarajevo because they want a political solution. Unfortunately, the Vance-Owen plan have accepted that kind of blackmail because they are still there around Sarajevo waiting, as they say, for a political solution. So Vance-Owen plan are illegal just because that plan was made under the threats of genocide or under continuing genocide. It's not duress, it is genocide.

As far as that goes, the heavy weaponry, the lifting of the arms embargo I completely endorse the Senate resolution relating to Bosnia-Herzegovina. I repeat I endorse that resolution. In my view it's long overdue. Such an action could have saved tens of thousands of lives.

Senator MIKULSKI. So, Mr. Minister, you're saying that the UN Resolutions are there. If they were implemented, this would then force the negotiations? When you say lift the siege of Sarajevo—

Foreign Minister SILAJDZIC. Exactly.

Senator MIKULSKI. —how would you see that thing accomplished in the most effective way?

Foreign Minister SILAJDZIC. Well, there is one simple way: it is to convince by words the aggressor to lift the siege of Sarajevo, to make peace because they made the war. But since it's not the case they should be given a deadline. If they do not comply, they should be bombed.

Senator MIKULSKI. I think that pretty well sums it up for my questions.

Thank you very much, Mr. Minister.

Foreign Minister SILAJDZIC. OK.

Chairman DECONCINI. Thank you, Senator. Thanks, Senator.

I want to take just a moment, a privilege of the Chair, to introduce a couple of visiting parliamentarians. Dr. Joseph Hoechtl, member of the Austrian Parliament, is with us today with the Austrian Christian Democratic Party.

Welcome, Mr. Hoechtl. I've worked with you in many areas of human rights.

And also I understand Peter Arbnoe is here from the Albanian Parliament, the Speaker of the Albanian Parliament. Where is he? Yes, very pleased to have you, Mr. Speaker.

Does the Senator have some questions? Please proceed.

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I also wish to share in the observations of what an eloquent and thoughtful statement that you have made and, for this member of the Commission, a great impression at the depth of your commitment to democracy and the future of your country.

As someone who does not have much personal background or familiarity with this region of the world, I'd like to ask some background questions.

During the period of the Yugoslav nation what was the status of ethnic relations within the Bosnia-Herzegovina region?

Foreign Minister SILAJDZIC. Well, that is a very good question and I am proud to say that Bosnia-Herzegovina is the most successful model of multi-ethnicity and multi-culturalism in Europe. Europe, unfortunately, still does not understand that. We are a few steps ahead and that is why Europe allowed this to happen to such a model of multi-ethnicity—a successful model of multi-ethnicity and multi-culturalism.

There were no problems among ethnic groups. We live there for centuries. And I wish today was with me the President of the Bosnian Parliament who happens to be a Serb to confirm this. In Sarajevo now Serbs, Croats, Moslem, Jews and others die the same from the shells and they want to go on living together.

The Vance-Owen plan is ethnic division of Bosnia-Herzegovina and that already is a victory for the aggressor because they somehow convinced the world that Bosnians do not want to live together. That's not true. The hatred, the fascism is imported into Bosnia-Herzegovina. Without it we could have lived together as we have lived for centuries.

Senator GRAHAM. You commented about the democratic elections and the multi-party character. Could you elaborate? When were the elections held, what was the nature of the composition of the political parties? The party that represents the government now or the coalition of parties, what is its ethnic composition of its members and constituencies?

Foreign Minister SILAJDZIC. Okay. The elections of 1991. At the multi-party elections many parties, some national, some non-national parties. They are now in the government, seven parties—excuse me, in the Parliament. The government is composed also multi-ethnic government. We have an institution of collective presidency, which is also multi-ethnic. That all has been brought to an end by the aggression. But, unfortunately, by the Vance-Owen plan that would be formally brought to an end. The legality of our system, of the first free democratic elections and the really free and democratic country. We pride ourselves with having still under all this aggression, death, we have free press. We do not have censored press. Our press is a free press. Still in Sarajevo there is an opposition and there is press. We want to build democracy, unfortunately we are not supported.

The tribal ethnic division is supported by the world and not the democracy.

Senator GRAHAM. There is considerable amount of apprehension bordering on skepticism as to how effective European, including United States, military intervention could be. Examples are cited of the number of divisions that Germany had in Bosnia during World War II without the ability to achieve control. Could you elaborate as to what you think would be the nature including the quantity of Western military intervention, over what period of time and what would be its prospects of accomplishing the stabilization of the area necessary to begin restoration of the democratic processes within Bosnia?

Foreign Minister SILAJDZIC. Let me refer shortly to the German divisions bogged down by the Serbs, as they say, in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

vina. If they were bogged down, they were bogged down by the Bosnians, not by anyone else. And simple research showed that there were not 36 German divisions, but only 16 and one of them only complete. And those German forces were defeated by the Bosnians.

I must also say that the aggressor today in Bosnia was very busy during the Second World War collaborating with Hitler. They were not bogging down the Hitler forces, we were. So this is the difference.

What we need is, as I said, sequestering all heavy weapons. The government of Bosnia-Herzegovina is comprising in saying not only the aggressor, but also ours. And the deadline should be given. If not, then the intervention is in place. Air raids on the interior position communication centers, etcetera. The ground work can be done by our forces. We have enough men willing to fight. We know how to fight, but we do not have weapons. We do not have weapons. So this is not a war, this is a slaughter, as you know. They have tanks, armor, aircraft. And I must say they have support of some other countries right now.

Why the arms embargo works against Bosnia-Herzegovina? It only works against Bosnia-Herzegovina. The arms embargo is there to stop us from arming ourselves. It does not stop Serbia. Serbia has spare parts for MIG 29s and they can only obtain it from Russia while we cannot get simple guns. This is a situation that actually resulted in 200,000 people killed. This is a war against civilization. This is a war against civilians. The fighters do not die as much as civilians. That is why the heavy weapons must be neutralized, destroyed or put under strict international control.

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman DECONCINI. We welcome the Senator from New York once again, the former Chairman of the Commission, and any opening statement or questions you may have of the Foreign Minister.

Senator D'AMATO. Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

First of all, I want to commend you and Co-Chairman Hoyer for calling this hearing. And I wonder if the Minister would comment, I don't know whether he has or not, as it relates to the granting of a visa in the United States to Mr. Karadzic, he's the self-proclaimed leader of the Serbian Republic. He was identified as a war criminal by former Secretary of State Eagleburger and now is coming to the United States to participate in the UN talks. Do you have any view on that?

Foreign Minister SILAJDZIC. I was surprised to learn that the United States Government has issued a visa to this man Karadzic. He is clearly a war criminal. But we knew in Geneva that there would be a lot of pressure to issue such a visa. And this is, ladies and gentlemen, without a large effort to amnesty those war criminals.

In Geneva we had a General Mladic, infamous General Mladic, who actually and we could all hear it on the TV set, for Sarajevo "burn it all," a command to his forces. Burn it all, burn Sarajevo. Now, he was sitting in Geneva, given a status of a negotiator and such negotiations produced Vance-Owen plan. I ask you now if this plan is flawed or is it legal or illegal?

Senator D'AMATO. Let me ask you, I did not hear you but my staff says that you indicated that you view this as similar to the same thing that took place in Czechoslovakia, is that not correct?

Foreign Minister SILAJDZIC. There is a small difference.

Senator D'AMATO. In the Munich Pact?

Foreign Minister SILAJDZIC. Yes, a very small difference. Those time when Benes were there, Chamberlain, they did sign a pact. It's similar. Czechoslovakia is a small country. Bosnia is a small country. Both under attack of fascism in 1938, now this is 1993. But at those times the world did not know about the concentration camps, mass killing and mass rape. We know now. Mr. Vance and Lord Owen know that there were mass killing, concentration camps and mass rape. That is why this world is held accountable for its behavior. We cannot allow 1938 to be repeated.

Senator D'AMATO. Mr. Chairman, I'd just make this observation: You and I took very strong positions as it related to the inaction of the Bush administration in failing to enforce no-fly zones, in failing to use our collective power with our allies if necessary identifying economic targets that would have discouraged what has taken place.

I don't mean to give the new administration a total pass, but obviously as a result of the inaction, lack of action in the past we've allowed and precipitated the situation that has become untenable today and it's far more complex for the new administration, there's no doubt. But I honestly believe that we don't need to get into a full scale land force invasion or sending of tens of thousands of troops or hundreds of thousands, but we do have the collective might and power to make those who have brought about and have supported this aggression pay a very real price. There are economic targets, there are power plants, there are the gas fields, there are the bridges that make possible the continued transportation of munitions, and so forth. And how we can reward, and that's what we've done, by inaction and by allowing the Serbs and Milosevic and company to simply talk about a proposed settlement and continue their blood letting and their aggression for such a long period of time. The collective shame in blood is on the hands of many so-called civilized nations.

I have to tell you, it seems to me, that there are going to be countless others who may pay a terrible price. Because the Moslems, if we just look at what took place to them, must be saying and there are those who will be out looking to stir up this religious hatred and what an area they can point to and say, "Look what civilized people did. They looked the other way while tens of thousands were being slaughtered, while a million plus were being made refugees, when the most innocent of the innocent women and children were being raped and pillaged they did nothing but conducted some talks to give the killers more time to consolidate their place." And that's exactly what's taken place.

And I wonder how you then explain to people that we ask brothers of all kinds and all colors and all religions to come together when, indeed, the world, this country, Western Europe, all of Europe look the other way? It certainly does not portend good things for the future and particularly as it relates to the kinds of

problems that we have not only in Europe but in other very sensitive areas.

I think we have created a terrible situation and I really think that the Secretary of State has committed a tragic error in allowing a war criminal to come into the country even to participate in this so-called peace process. It should not have been done. We barred Yasser Arafat from coming in. Certainly we should have barred this killer. His conduct has been every bit as outrageous as any other killer that we have seen. He is, indeed, a war criminal.

And, Mr. Chairman, I again look forward to working with you in the spirit that we have always worked with, in the bipartisan spirit, to see if there isn't some help, some way. I'm very much concerned about what might be in store for all the people of Kosova because I think that once the adventurers are through here they will then look to that situation.

I don't know, Mr. Minister, if you have any thoughts on what the fate of Kosova may be.

Foreign Minister SILAJDZIC. I think that Milosevic will not do anything immediately in Kosova because he attends now to Bosnia and because Kosova is under occupation already. It's a segregation system there, it's apartheid system. But as soon as Bosnia is gone, no doubt he will attend to Kosova then to make sure that the Albanians in Kosova do exist only as a name.

Senator D'AMATO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman DECONCINI. Thank you, Senator D'Amato.

Mr. Minister, you responded to Senator Mikulski's question of what should be done, and you said that a deadline should be set and that if there is not a lifting of the siege of Sarajevo, that there should be bombing. Is the full extent that you think would be necessary would be air strikes in the event there is not a lifting of the siege of Sarajevo after an appropriate deadline is given?

Foreign Minister SILAJDZIC. Mr. Chairman, after ten months of the siege of Sarajevo we are entitled to say that we know what can end the siege of Sarajevo. No talks because they ended the talks in Geneva by shelling Sarajevo heavily; 46 people died in 2 days of shelling while the final session in Geneva went on. So this is to show that they do not care about the Geneva Conference, about the United Nation's resolutions, about anything but force.

Ten months is already too long.

Now the only way is to give them a deadline and after that to conduct air strikes against the artillery position that killed thousands in Sarajevo, that keeps Sarajevo in a stone age. People are already living like animals in Sarajevo.

I came from there. About ten days ago I was in Sarajevo. And I can tell you that some people there do live like animals now. It is fear, it is lack of the basic supplies, lack of medicine, lack of basic freedom. Children living in the cellars and listen to the shells for ten months are children no more.

Chairman DECONCINI. Do you think—

Foreign Minister SILAJDZIC. Bosnia-Herzegovina is the only country in the world without children right now.

Chairman DECONCINI. Mr. Minister, do you think air strikes on the installations that are doing the shelling would be sufficient to lift the siege of Sarajevo?

Foreign Minister SILAJDZIC. Yes, of course. If we had the tools, we would have finished the job. But we don't have the tools.

Chairman DECONCINI. How many people would you estimate are still living in Sarajevo today?

Foreign Minister SILAJDZIC. It's somewhere between 370,000 to 400,000 people.

Chairman DECONCINI. And what was the population prior to the Serb shelling and bombarding?

Foreign Minister SILAJDZIC. Somewhere around 600,000 people.

Chairman DECONCINI. So almost half of them have left or been killed.

Foreign Minister SILAJDZIC. A great part, yes.

Chairman DECONCINI. Yes.

You, obviously, have sat with Mr. Vance separately or have you sat with Mr. Vance and Mr. Owen separately from the peace talks?

Foreign Minister SILAJDZIC. Yes, many times.

Chairman DECONCINI. And if you'd care to give us your view, what is their response when you raise privately or even at the formal meetings the point that while we are discussing a peace process and dividing up Bosnia-Herzegovina, there is shelling going on right now in the capital by the people who are sitting across the table? What is the answer to that? What do they say?

Foreign Minister SILAJDZIC. Well, they call it the reality.

Chairman DECONCINI. The reality?

Foreign Minister SILAJDZIC. Yes, they call it reality and they call on—

Chairman DECONCINI. You mean it's something that they can't do anything about?

Foreign Minister SILAJDZIC [continuing]. Exactly. They call us to accept the reality and at the same time they work against the lifting of the arms embargo. Many times I said I cannot understand that. I understand that you cannot protect us, but I do not understand that you work against lifting of the arms embargo.

Chairman DECONCINI. Let me ask some questions about the arms embargo and then I'll yield to the representative from New Jersey.

If the arms embargo was lifted, how long would it take, in your opinion, for the Bosnian-Herzegovina people to be able to defend themselves from the present onslaught?

Foreign Minister SILAJDZIC. Two to 3 months.

Chairman DECONCINI. Thank you.

I yield to Representative Smith.

Senator PRESSLER. Mr. Chairman, I want to put a statement on the record.

Chairman DECONCINI. The Senator from North Dakota. I yield to the Senator from North Dakota. That's South Dakota. That's close enough for government work.

Senator PRESSLER. I'll try to return later and ask additional questions. I'm very interested in the witness'—

Chairman DECONCINI. You may proceed with a question if you like?

Senator PRESSLER [continuing]. All right. I have two questions I'll ask very quickly. I thank you very much for allowing me this chance.

If you've already covered this, please tell me. But I'm very interested in Lord Owen's attitude to the so-called Vance-Owen plan for the ten proposed provinces. Now, Lord Owen has offered the view that it was difficult for the mediators to demand that the Serbs give up all their territorial gains in Bosnia since it was the Serbs who were victorious on the battlefield. Speaking for the European Community, Lord Owen seems to be glaringly tolerant of the violence committed by the Serbs. By contrast, President Clinton has demonstrated, I think, greater sensitivity to the dangerous precedent that would be set by the Vance-Owen plan.

First of all, where is Mr. Owen coming from with this Vance-Owen plan? How do you see that?

Foreign Minister SILAJDZIC. Well, we discussed that at length with Lord Owen and I expressed the view that if we say that the Yugoslav army or these criminals are ready to withdraw from some territories, it means that the other part is it stays legal. So we legalize the aggression, actually.

And number two, they called this a victorious army. That's not a victorious army. Number one, it's not an army. We cannot call armed bands that kill and rape an army. And number two, they're not victorious. They can shoot and shell at a standoff, but they do not fight.

So I think I must say that since you asked me specifically about Lord Owen's position, I must say that his position shifted visibly in the last 2 months from a man who was asking for an intervention to a man who is actually appeasing the Serbs and is now lately saying that he trusts Mr. Milosevic and he does not think that Mr. Milosevic and Mr. Karadzic are war criminals. This is a very bad indication for me.

Senator PRESSLER. Yes. As a practical matter, it appears that they've got a plan and the United States is against it. Some of the world press is making it sound as though we're against a peace plan. The people running around the UN seem to be saying this. How can we avoid being backed into a corner? Here we have this plan—this fancy plan for 10 enclaves, and we're against it. It sounds as though we're against motherhood.

Foreign Minister SILAJDZIC. That plan in itself, any line on the map of Bosnia-Herzegovina is already a reward for the aggression because we are ethnically mixed population. We always were for hundreds of centuries—for hundreds of years living together. Now, any ethnic division is already a victory and an introduction into a final dismantling of our state.

Number two, these so-called provinces are based upon unprincipled criteria. Is it an ethnic criteria? If so, then why the Moslems, for example, are not living in their own territories where they have relative or absolute majority? If so, why, for example, Bitola area is cut off and so on. So I don't want to go into details now here.

Why Montenegro/Crna Gora area is isolated from the so-called Moslem provinces by a small piece of territory, absolutely nonsense territory which has no communication, which has no economy and so on?

The most important thing, the ethnically cleansed areas are left by this plan under the rule of those who did the ethnic cleansing.

Senator PRESSLER. Which would be the Serbs?

Foreign Minister SILAJDZIC. Yes. Beerina, Butcko, Prijedor, Kljuc, Chinachi and other areas. Actually, the people expelled from there, killed or expelled and then these territories are now by this plan left under the forces that did the ethnic cleansing. Well, that is unacceptable as far as the government Bosnia-Herzegovina is concerned. That is not acceptable. That may be imposed on us, but will not be accepted.

Senator PRESSLER. In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, let me say that it appears to me that we have the phenomena of the Vance-Owen plan in 1993 for 10 ethnically cleansed provinces dominated by the Serbs. It seems unusual that in 1993 we have a plan put forth by two of the world's leading statesmen, supposedly, calling for 10 ethnically cleansed provinces. That really sounds strange to me.

Now, let's just imagine that the Vance-Owen plan went into effect. What would be the situation in a year from now?

Foreign Minister SILAJDZIC. Well, it has already taken effect, but they announced it and because people are being expelled, ethnically cleansed right now because of these lines already drawn on the map of Bosnia-Herzegovina. We have people expelled from the town of Trebinje, 5,500 people are now wondering on the borders between Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia and Montenegro. They don't have anywhere to go. They don't have a place to go. Why? Because the Serbs in that province now say this is a Serbian province and you cannot live here.

So that plan, although not accepted and most surely will not be accepted by the world community, is already creating great problems in Bosnia-Herzegovina. It created problems between the Moslems and the Croats also. Why? Because the militant wing of the Croats' parties in Bosnia-Herzegovina say well this is now a Croatian territory, a national territory according to the Vance-Owen plan, so get out of there. This is our territory. You have to be subordinate to us. That is what led to the fights in central Bosnia.

So this plan already is making great damage to Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Senator PRESSLER. I might conclude by saying that I was at the UN the other day, and the Vance-Owen plan has a lot of credibility in the hallways of the UN. I can't understand why because it seems that in 1993 such a plan is abhorrent to everything we believe in.

And I thank you very much for your presence here.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you very much for allowing me to ask my questions.

STATEMENT OF SENATOR LARRY PRESSLER, A U.S. SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA

Mr. Chairman, life in Bosnia-Herzegovina continues to deteriorate. There is little food, water, heat, and electricity in most areas of former Yugoslavia. While Cyrus Vance and Lord Owen have switched venues from Geneva to New York to negotiate settlements of the ethnic conflicts in the region, life for the Bosnian Muslims and Croats has, at best, improved little.

Because of firm opposition to rewarding the evil aggression of the Bosnian Serbs, I and four of my colleagues recently sent a letter to Secretary of State Christopher, urging him to deny Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic a visa for entrance into the United States. We believe that allowing Karadzic into the United States sends a wrong message—a message condoning the atrocities his government is committing

against the Bosnian Muslims and the Croats. After all, according to the State Department, Mr. Karadzic is a suspected war criminal. Despite our efforts, the State Department allowed Karadzic to enter our country.

According to the Immigration Act of 1990, a visa applicant can be denied entry into the United States because of international terrorist activity; membership in a totalitarian organization; or if the Secretary of State believes entry into the United States would have adverse foreign policy consequences. The Serbian ethnic cleansing, rape, and brutal totalitarianism provided more than enough evidence to justify Karadzic's exclusion. Still, the State Department allowed this aggressor to enter the United States.

I support peace in the Bosnian region. However, we must win a true peace, not force a false peace. I do not condone rewarding the territorial gains of an aggressor through the Vance/Owen peace plan. Until he and his marauders are brought to justice, I will not support Karadzic's presence in the United States.

In a separate letter to the U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, I urged him to have the U.N. Commission on Experts question Mr. Karadzic while he is in the United States. The world needs to know the extent of Mr. Karadzic' participation in Serbian war crimes in Bosnia. The process of justice must not take a back seat to the prospects for peace.

Chairman DECONCINI. Mr. Smith?

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Silajdzic, it's nice to see you again. You know, you were really right on the mark, as I think most if not all members of this Commission saw, when you were here last time. You made a very impassioned plea to lift the arms embargo which was hurting only one side; it was not hurting the aggressor, it was only hurting those who were being invaded. As I think you well know, both Mr. Hoyer, Mr. DeConcini and I, and many others, have dropped into the hopper legislation calling for the end of the arms embargo, as part of a comprehensive approach. If only more people in policy positions had listened to you sooner, perhaps we might be in a different situation today.

I'm really struck by how courageous your government, you personally and others, including President Izetbegovic, are to continue pressing for principle at a time when people in your country have suffered so much. You have pointed out that the West, through the Owens-Vance plan, is too willing to accept something that will acquiesce to ethnic cleansing and reward those who have practiced that grievous practice.

When the President was in town approximately 3 weeks ago and met with several of us, including Lee Hamilton the Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, he noted that some kind of partitioning might be acceptable but those lines have been vague. Now, knowing that you and your government have rejected this plan as the Clinton administration apparently has as well, where do we go from here? Is the concept of having ten or eight or any other number of new areas dead? It seemed to me that concept led to the breakthrough in Geneva when it looked like some progress may occur. In other words, it was a major, major concession, without using that word in the pejorative sense, by your government to get that process moving. And yet, when the plan was finally laid out, it was unacceptable. Those promoting the plan should have listened.

Is there another map that might serve in helping to bring peace and, hopefully, long term stability?

Foreign Minister SILAJDZIC. The government of Bosnia-Herzegovina joined Geneva talks on understanding that there will be no ethnic division of Bosnia-Herzegovina because that is impossible

except by force and by killing of the people. That is why Milosevic and Karadzic are doing exactly that; they are killing people and expelling people because that is the only way to divide Bosnia-Herzegovina and to create these ethnically pure regions.

Now to start with, the government of Bosnia-Herzegovina has agreed to make a compromise and say, "Okay if any of the ethnic groups here are afraid of living in a very strongly centralized unitary state, let's make a decentralized state but along the lines of both—well ethnic lines, communication wide economic and so on." So let us create regions with natural gravity regions, natural geographical, communicational and so on that have been created throughout centuries. So let us do that and let us make each one of these regions economically viable because after all this ends and it will hopefully, we have to live. We cannot receive humanitarian aid for ages and it is very humiliating for us. But in the meantime we have to do this.

So these are the lines, the lines we agreed on in having ten provinces. We are talking about 13, 8, it doesn't matter, but what matters is that these provinces are economically viable, they take into account the ethnic lines wherever possible, they take into account the economic requests and so on and so on.

This map is an ethnic map, ethnic division. Nothing to do with the economy. Nothing to do with the history. Nothing to do with the communications. It has throughways through provinces. It even at one point they proposed to us that the provinces have relations with neighboring countries. So we see a clear intention to dismantle our country. A clear intention to redefine the whole situation of the civil war, which it is not. A clear intention to bring Karadzic and his people into the government so they can walk the streets of Sarajevo tomorrow in which they killed thousands of people.

Well, this in our mind defies the basic concepts not of the United Nations, but of humanity as a whole.

Mr. SMITH. I thank you and appreciate your testimony.

Chairman DECONCINI. If I could just follow up on that. I was just talking to Chairman Hoyer about it. You're suggesting economic states within Bosnia-Herzegovina or social geographic states that would release—

Foreign Minister SILAJDZIC. Regions.

Chairman DECONCINI [continuing]. Regions. Regions. That would still be subject to a national government authority?

Foreign Minister SILAJDZIC. Yes, that's right, sir.

Chairman DECONCINI. The real government would have responsibility often problems of raising taxes, revenues, but some services would have to be provided from the national government such as diplomatic and international resources—

Foreign Minister SILAJDZIC. Yes.

Chairman DECONCINI [continuing]. As well as security of the border. Is that what you're talking about?

Foreign Minister SILAJDZIC. The security of the border.

Chairman DECONCINI. Now, if that were achieved from the standpoint of the minority of Serbs who are now in a majority region but subject to federal jurisdiction, what assurance would they have that there wouldn't be some repression brought by the federal government because of the reality of what has happened to

the Moslem population under this awful war that is going on today? How do you answer that?

Foreign Minister SILAJDZIC. Well, they will be given the same assurances in practice as those Serbs living in Sarajevo now have.

Chairman DECONCINI. You believe that any stable federal government that you were the Foreign Minister of or anybody else was in Sarajevo for the entire republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina could guarantee to any Serb that they would be safe living under a republic with regions as you define them?

Foreign Minister SILAJDZIC. As I said, Serbs in Sarajevo now are about 70,000 people. Serbs are as safe as others. But we go step forward and allow a new constitution, we call for international guarantees, international presence, ombudsmen.

Chairman DECONCINI. So you would envision some international presence to guarantee the safety of these minorities?

Foreign Minister SILAJDZIC. Yes, we would. Exactly. We do not refer to them as minorities.

Chairman DECONCINI. Well, of ethnic Serbs then or whoever?

Foreign Minister SILAJDZIC. Well, we still believe we are all equal there, there are no minorities. But still if there is this insecurity, we call for the international community to guarantee—

Chairman DECONCINI. To guarantee everybody?

Foreign Minister SILAJDZIC [continuing]. Not only to guarantee, but to have a physical presence—

Chairman DECONCINI. Presence.

Foreign Minister SILAJDZIC [continuing]. There for a period of time, five or ten years.

Chairman DECONCINI. To ensure?

Foreign Minister SILAJDZIC. To ensure this, the human rights.

Chairman DECONCINI. Co-Chairman Hoyer?

Co-Chairman HOYER. Mr. Minister, I apologize for having to leave and come back and so I missed a lot of the questions and I'll try not to be redundant, but I would like to follow up on this question because I'm sure we'll be discussing this at length and the administration is going to be considering the Vance-Owen plan. It has not endorsed the Vance-Owen plan, as I understand it, but it has it under consideration.

Now, the difference between what you're suggesting and the Vance-Owen plan is that the Vance-Owen plan suggests, first of all, ethnically divided regions as opposed to geographically or economically divided regions. And secondly, the central government under the Vance-Owen plan or the central authority is a very weak one, correct? Is my perception the same as yours that essentially these would be 10 autonomous regions in a very, very loose confederation?

Foreign Minister SILAJDZIC. Under the Vance-Owen plan that is the case.

Co-Chairman HOYER. OK. And what you're suggesting is the creation of political subdivisions within a unified national state with a strong central government?

Foreign Minister SILAJDZIC. A stronger central government. Central government cannot survive on the foreign affairs only. The central government, any state to be a state must have the minimum of the powers. Otherwise it's not a state, it creates instability.

We want these regions to enjoy a high degree of autonomy, but there must be central government otherwise there is no life there.

Co-Chairman HOYER. Now, the high degree of autonomy that you project for the political subdivisions that you propose—you being a collective you—would serve the purpose of political organization, economic organization. Why are those necessary? And I'm not saying that they're not necessary. Obviously, the United States is somewhat analogous, I suppose, to perhaps what you have in mind. But can you give me the theory your proposal—the Vance-Owen plan is an ethnically based division—what rationale would you use when you say geographical? Do you have a plan to do that? Is there a plan in existence to do that?

Foreign Minister SILAJDZIC. Yes.

Co-Chairman HOYER. And how many political subdivisions does that create?

Foreign Minister SILAJDZIC. Well, that creates also by, I think, 13 provinces.

Co-Chairman HOYER. Thirteen.

Foreign Minister SILAJDZIC. The towns—Bosnia-Herzegovina is an old country so there is rural, there is urban population and this is actually the essence of our problem is the cultural problem. It's not ethnic, it's cultural problem, the difference between rural and urban.

Now, there are urban centers and these urban centers are also geographically natural gravitation centers and so on, economically and so on.

So we have to take into account the communications, the river beds, the mountains, the different basins and so on. That is how we envisage Bosnia-Herzegovina as a modern state. But then to have it as it is now, ethnically divided but unjust, this is not a just principle ethnic division. This is an unjust ethnic division of Bosnia-Herzegovina. That is why we say it will create more problems and it will not create peace and it has already now created the problems because it appeases one side, appeases the other side in order to gain its support and works against the third side. Well, this is not going to create any stability. This is the seed of further problems.

That is why we say any ethnic division, any ethnic lines—there must be some guess, but ethnic lines are by definition already the victory of the aggression. And it is a very dangerous precedent.

Co-Chairman HOYER. In the course of discussions, and if this question was asked I'm sorry it's a redundant question, how many troops do you think would be necessary to enforce or to monitor the Vance-Owen plan if that plan were adopted by the international community? Has there been any speculation on that?

Foreign Minister SILAJDZIC. Yes. That is what I do not understand about the Vance-Owen plan. They're calling for the presence of the Western soldiers on the soil of Bosnia-Herzegovina without really controlling the heavy arms. The first thing that would happen, in my opinion, is for the Serbs to kill some Western soldiers in order to create a public opinion opposition to withdraw them. So I do not understand that plan. But, in any case, a figure of 100,000 people was mentioned, 100,000 to 200,000 people.

Co-Chairman HOYER. Let me ask you something on that. Assuming the Vance-Owen plan were imposed by the presence of 100,000

to 200,000 troops it's your projection that the Serbs would perceive that as a victory, am I correct?

Foreign Minister SILAJDZIC. No, they will shoot at the soldiers in order to create an opposition in the country that sent the soldiers to Bosnia-Herzegovina. But the victory is there if these soldiers keep—protect the lines, the front lines.

Co-Chairman HOYER. That's what I'm saying.

Foreign Minister SILAJDZIC. As in Croatia this is what happened there.

Co-Chairman HOYER. The ethnic division set up under Vance-Owen is an ethnic division that you believe the Serbs would favor, at least as an interim step?

Foreign Minister SILAJDZIC. That's right.

Co-Chairman HOYER. Of course, one result under your hypothesis if the troops were deployed and the Serbs attacked the troops would be that the troops would be withdrawn. The other hypothesis could be that they would advance; that is to say that they would not passively take the attack and that, in fact, Serbia would place itself in a position to be attacked perhaps on its own territory, Belgrade etcetera, so that they might simply allow this to occur as an interim with the feeling that at some point the troops were going to be withdrawn and then take further advantage of the situation as it then existed on the ground with these 10 autonomous provinces. Is that also a possible alternative or you think not?

Foreign Minister SILAJDZIC. Well, we have to bear in mind that the—Serbs have not accepted this plan. They refute it. Why? Because what they really think is that they can keep the territories taken by force. And if any UN soldiers come, they will come to keep the front lines so that the territories gained by force will gain the status quo status. This is behind it.

Co-Chairman HOYER. Mr. Minister, because our time is brief I won't ask additional questions, although I would be interested in pursuing them with you. But have you requested to see anybody in the Clinton Administration, in President Clinton's Administration on your visit here?

Foreign Minister SILAJDZIC. Yes, I have requested to see Mr. Christopher and I hope I will see him.

Co-Chairman HOYER. How long will you be here, sir?

Foreign Minister SILAJDZIC. How long?

Co-Chairman HOYER. How long do you plan on this visit to be in the United States?

Foreign Minister SILAJDZIC. Well, I'm here on this new business. I do not know how long, but as long as I'm needed here.

Co-Chairman HOYER. Again, as some other members of the Commission have said, we perceive you to be a very courageous and a very articulate and compelling spokesman on behalf of your people.

Senator DeConcini and I and the members of this Commission are going to keep a sharp focus on this until it's resolved favorably.

Foreign Minister SILAJDZIC. Thank you very much.

Chairman DeCONCINI. Congressman McCloskey?

Mr. McCLOSKEY. Thank you very much, Senator. And I also apologize to Mr. Hoyer for necessary departure, brief absence.

I appreciate so much, Mr. Minister, you being here. I can honestly say, in all my years in the Congress, you have been one of the

three or four most courageous statesmen I've ever dealt with and have made a very, very vivid impression on all of us. And I can only wish you well in everything you do.

But in a way I guess I'm asking you for some advice here by asking this question. As you know, the Clinton administration is doing its policy review. They've spoken much more, I think, forthrightly and sympathetically as to the Bosnian concerns than the Bush Administration did act. But we saw these, quite frankly, I think somewhat undiplomatic remarks yesterday as reported in The New York Times about Mr. Christopher and in affect Mr. Clinton by Dr. Owen.

I had a chat with Mr. Owen the other night, but partially using Mr. Owen's words and some of the feedback I'm getting from some key leadership in the House as to the assessment of the Vance plan, the idea being from some it's "it's the only game in town and we also see and hear the statements and reports that we'll never turn the allies around so therefore we have to accept this."

(A), could you comment on that and then, (B) with your proven foresight so far with the Committee could you give us an opinion on what the overall situation will be a year from now as far as the former Yugoslav area, in effect Bosnia, Macedonia, and so forth, the impact on the EC and the world community if the Vance-Owen plan were to be accepted as is?

Foreign Minister SILAJDZIC. Well, the overall impact will be the defeat of democratic forces and encouragement of the nationalist forces. On the ground Sarajevo will not number 400,000 people, but 200,000 people, most probably. We shall have guerrilla enclaves surrounded still by Serbian forces. Most probably renewed fight between Serbia and Croatia, but now over territories in Bosnia. And we will have more tension, more instability in the region including two NATO countries, Greece and Turkey.

Containing the war in Bosnia the flame itself might be possible, but containing the virus we know now that is impossible. It's already there, the tensions are great in Kosovo, in Sandjak in Vojvodina, also in Macedonia.

I think that it's now really time to do something and do without delay. And, as I say, if we want to create situation, if I were in a position to suggest to the American government a position, I would say that we must, number one, secure the survival of the population. That's what it's all about. This way they're completing the job of killing the people, quite simple by taking away from them, from us, from anyway around the heavy artillery. As I said, the government of Bosnia-Herzegovina is ready to compromise. The UN Resolutions does not call for the weapons of the government Bosnia-Herzegovina to be sequestered but we do that willingly as a compromise from our side; take away all the weapons. This will secure the survival and will create conditions for normal talks. Otherwise without that we shall have no peace and we shall have no talk. If the heavy weapons, if the aggressor refuses or anyone refuses to give up these weapons, then the deadline must be set and the force must be used. It's long overdue. It already cost 200,000 people's lives, 1+ million homeless. We are looking for more of that.

Mr. McCLOSKEY. Just two more brief questions. I realize time is a problem and we haven't heard from some other people.

But you mentioned that Vance and Owen are approaching the parties to agree to a general amnesty. Is it your understanding that they want such an amnesty to cover Karadzic and his colleagues as well as lower-level persons who have implemented genocide? How do Vance and Owen reconcile this general amnesty plan with the stated terms of the UN Security Council's Resolutions?

Foreign Minister SILAJDZIC. They haven't said anything explicit on the subject, but the indication is there by bringing these people to Geneva, by pressurizing the U.S. Government to issue a visa to war criminal and by saying, by Lord Owen explicitly, that he does not think that Milosevic encourages our war criminals.

Mr. McCLOSKEY. Then that just leads me to my concluding question. The other morning in the Financial Times, to me it's one of the most amazing interviews in this whole crisis, but Dr. Owen, in essence, refers to the wonderful man-to-man bond of trust between Mr. Vance and Milosevic, commends Mr. Milosevic as an outstanding, alert and astute politician, I guess Dr. Owen's statements or implications are that he's seen the error of their ways, that of course, the Serbs have had some unfortunate nationalistic tendencies in their record, but now he's a born again, humane pacifist who will lead Serbia back into the civilized community. What is happening there? Why are we seeing statements like this on the record? Not that I don't believe anyone could be born again or people could mend their ways, but as I understand it not one Croat family has been returned to the controlled areas in Croatia and Mr. Karadzic is repeatedly on record as saying the Vance-Owen plan is, at best, a slowdown for their plan to take the Bosnia areas into greater Serbia. Why do we see statements like this, Mr. Minister?

Foreign Minister SILAJDZIC. Well, it's difficult to say, but for the conference to succeed they must get the support of the strongest if they do not want to use force, and they do not want to use force so that they have to appease them. And there is, I think, genuine belief on the part of Mr. Vance that Mr. Milosevic is a nice man.

Mr. McCLOSKEY. There is?

Foreign Minister SILAJDZIC. I think it's genuine.

Mr. McCLOSKEY. It's genuine, is that right?

Foreign Minister SILAJDZIC. I think it's genuine because I trust Mr. Vance's integrity and I think when he says something, I think he's a very truthful person. So he thinks that Mr. Milosevic is a nice man.

And also, Lord Owen is saying now that he trusts Milosevic. So it must be also attributed to Mr. Milosevic's charming powers, if I may say so.

Co-Chairman HOYER. Well, which Milosevic are you talking about? The one Mr. Vance talked about, is not the same one I met with, I don't think.

Foreign Minister SILAJDZIC. Well, I'm afraid it's the same person.

Mr. McCLOSKEY. Well, I won't ask you your assessment of Mr. Milosevic unless you want to add to what you said. But you don't think he's born again and ready to take the area into new ways? I hate to use that because it's a Christian religious term, but you know what I'm talking about.

Foreign Minister SILAJDZIC. I'm trying to say what I—I don't think Milosevic has any real conviction of anything. Basically he's a nationalist. I don't think so. He was a very good Communist. He wants to rule, that's all. He's using nationalism, using the brain-wash to the Serbian population to do this. And I think he's partly a sick man. And that is—he's very, very troubled person, but of considerable—I will not say political, but of a considerable powers to lie and convince people that he's sane and he's telling the truth. He has that talent.

Mr. McCLOSKEY. Mr. Karadzic has never been on the record yet as saying he's ready to amend his ways and not take the possible Bosnian Serbian areas into a greater Serbia. He hasn't said they've changed their mind on that, have they?

Foreign Minister SILAJDZIC. No, no. Not at all.

Mr. McCLOSKEY. Thank you very much, Mr. Minister.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman DeCONCINI. Cardin

Mr. CARDIN. Thank you, Chairman DeConcini. And I thank you particularly and Chairman Hoyer and Ms. Mikulski for your leadership on this issue.

I think some of us have an eery feeling that we may be facing some of the very same issues that were faced in 1938 that led to the Munich Pact. And Lord Owen seems to be playing the role of Neville Chamberlain very well, at least in my own personal opinion.

There seems to be three areas that many members of Congress agree on. One, that we ought to at least enforce the no-fly zone. Two, that we ought to lift the arms embargo that effectively only applies to Bosnia. And that we ought to provide humanitarian relief using whatever means necessary consistent with the United Nations Resolution.

What does it mean to enforce the no-fly zone? Would it be necessary to actually target the areas in Serbia in the process of effectively accomplishing that, Mr. Silajdzic?

Foreign Minister SILAJDZIC. The civilian population of Bosnia-Herzegovina will be protected from the immediate and indirect consequences of the air power of the Serbia and Montenegro meaning that we have now air raids from the airport Poniqua near the town of Vize, which is the territory of Serbia, daily raids on the territory of Srebrenica. Day before yesterday they killed 16 people.

There are helicopter bases near the town of Banja Luka from which the flights take place mostly.

The United Nations, as you might know, monitoring forces registered more than 300 violations since the ban on the military flights over Bosnia-Herzegovina was imposed.

Mr. CARDIN. I think that question could be developed more, but I don't want to take the time.

I do want to ask another question, and if you think it's inappropriate, you don't have to answer it. But from your prospective what do you think has been the role of the Orthodox Church in this conflict?

Foreign Minister SILAJDZIC. It depends on the individuals. I met all sorts of priests who they say feel ashamed. I know the Orthodox priest from the old church in Sarajevo, which is by the way the

only undamaged cultural object in Sarajevo, cultural site, the religious cultural site in Sarajevo. Nothing happened to it thanks mostly to the understanding citizens of Sarajevo, mostly Moslem. And that priest and other priests say that they are ashamed. They do not understand. But I also think that some other religious leaders were used in this or misused in this nationalistic campaign.

Mr. CARDIN. One last question and then I'll turn it back to the Chairman. If we lifted the arms embargo, can you describe some of the very first things that would occur over the succeeding 2 to 3 weeks in terms of your status, vis-a-vis the Serbian forces?

Foreign Minister SILAJDZIC. We should secure, that's the first priority. To secure the convoys by force, to get the convoys through to the population in eastern Bosnia. We have 100 people a day dying there from starvation. One hundred people a day.

Mr. CARDIN. But you think the arms could be secured within a reasonable time frame to give you a fighting chance, so to speak?

Foreign Minister SILAJDZIC. If the arms embargo is lifted, then the arms will be secure within 2 or 3 weeks.

Mr. CARDIN. Two to 3 weeks?

Foreign Minister SILAJDZIC. Right.

Mr. CARDIN. Sufficient arms to defend yourselves?

Foreign Minister SILAJDZIC. To defend a limited contingent of defensive arms.

Mr. CARDIN. Thank you.

The other area of concern was Macedonia, but Mr. DeConcini, if you wanted to get into that, I'll defer to you.

Chairman DECONCINI. Thank you very much. No, my problem is I have to leave by 4:00. If the Foreign Minister wants to stay and you want to address that with the concurrence with the Co-Chairman, I'd be glad to let you do that. But I do want to—Mrs. Bentley is here, I do want her to have an opportunity to review for the next five to seven minutes, if that's appropriate, Mrs. Bentley?

Mrs. BENTLEY. That would be fine, Mr. Chairman, because I only have a few minutes myself. And I apologize for not having been here.

It's good to see you again, Mr. Silajdzic.

Foreign Minister SILAJDZIC. Thank you.

Mrs. BENTLEY. And I'll be interested in the record to read what you had to say because I think it's important that we get all sides on this situation. It's a very, very terrifying and a very tragic situation, as you and I have discussed before.

One of the questions I have right now is do you have any feeling at all that there can be a successful conclusion with further negotiations to the Vance-Owen peace proposal, their initiative?

Foreign Minister SILAJDZIC. That process went astray. We have to straighten it. The peace process went astray because it appeases the aggressor. It appeases the stronger and there can be no meaningful talks or no meaningful peace based upon a false flawed premise.

The problem is that those people killing us now, raping us, shellings us will not start really talking as long as they possess all these heavy arms, artillery, airplanes and so on. They are power met. We have to take the weapons. You were not here, Mrs. Bentley. My proposal was not to take the heavy weapons only from them, but

from everybody else. All of us who have heavy weapons must deliver it immediately to the international forces. When I say international forces, I omit to say the UN forces because they have no credibility in Bosnia-Herzegovina anymore.

Our Vice Prime Minister was killed while under protection of the United Nation forces. We would like to see very much, very much, NATO forces taking care of that. All weapons, whoever has it, to immediately surrender it to the international forces. That will stop the mass killing of the civilians and that will create a situation where these talks are meaningful and then the peace based upon the talks is long, hopefully, meaningful and successful. This is what I think about that.

Mrs. BENTLEY. So what you're saying is we need a couple of other steps first and then get back into the talks and let's really negotiate and get them so that all of the parties can talk and feel like they're being heard and are having an input into the talks?

Foreign Minister SILAJDZIC. Not only that, but these are the first steps. The one benefit we gain from not having these heavy weapons around is that the democratic forces within the community Bosnia-Herzegovina are listened to and heard. This way we only listen to those people having the arms. What about the other segments of the population, the democratic forces? They should be encouraged.

As you know, during any war, and this war is bringing up people who should not be leading the country. We should listen to others. They do not have arms. And this will, taking away of the heavy arms, will create a situation of, if I may say so, a social equilibrium. Now only those with weapons are countable.

Mrs. BENTLEY. Was the peace process negotiations affected in anyway by the recent Croatian incursions into Krajina in your opinion or were they going off base before that?

Foreign Minister SILAJDZIC. Yes, it has increased the security, the loss of credibility in arrangements like the Vance-Owen plan. This is a problem now. We know now that the heavy weapons, even when taken away, if not strictly under the international control could be used again. Then the offensives, counter offensives, can be undertaken as long as the heavy weapons are there. Once they are away, then there will be peace. But in Bosnia-Herzegovina under one condition, that the international community guarantees that Bosnia-Herzegovina will not be attacked if it demilitarizes, otherwise we cannot surrender our weapons.

Mrs. BENTLEY. Those are the questions I have, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman DECONCINI. Thank you.

Mrs. BENTLEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman DECONCINI. Mr. Minister, thank you very much for your testimony here. Quite frankly, I think every time you appear here we become, at least many of us, more upset and more frustrated with, at least speaking from this Senator's point of view, our government's nonaction. But I think you help us lay the foundation to make the case to a new Administration that something more has to be done. And I thank you for your time here today.

I also want to make the announcement that Bianca Jagger who is representing the International Rescue Committee Women's Commission is here. We want to thank you for being here today and all

you've done, and I understand that you will be traveling to Bosnia in the very near future and perhaps you can help us with this problem with some report when you return.

Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Minister.

Foreign Minister SILAJDZIC. Thank you.

[Whereupon, the hearing was concluded at 3:56 p.m.]

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